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Louisiana: Colonial Records, 1712-2012

Posted on 21/11/2012 by John Cairns

In 1712, Antoine Crozat obtained a charter from the French Crown that granted him various privileges, mainly over commerce, in Louisiana for fifteen years. He had to send two ships each year to the colony with passengers and carrying material for the Crown. He also had each year to send a ship to Africa to buy slaves to sell to the colonists. The charter also provided that the Custom of Paris should apply in Louisiana. A little later another Crown document created the Superior Council. This was the start of the organized legal system in Louisiana.

In this tercentenary year, the Louisiana Museum Foundation has started a project to digitize the colonial legal records: see <http://www.thelmf.org/colonial-documents>. It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of this project in both preserving and making more accessible the rich records of Louisiana's legal historical past. Some of them were calendared and described in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly in the inter-War period, which just serves to whet the appetite. But they are important for legal historians, social historians, economic historians and genealogists, to name but a few. What can be done with them is indicated by some recent books, such as Din and Harkins, *The New Orleans Cabildo* (1996), to name but one.

A party on 8 December inaugurates the enterprize: <http://www.thelmf.org/a-records-review-colonial-documents-going-digital-save-the-date>



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